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There is Still Time to Prepare for the Holidays by Getting Fully Vaccinated

Travel and Spend Time with Loved Ones Safely This Year

Houston- Since there were no approved COVID-19 vaccines last year, many families scrapped travel plans, downsized family gatherings, or canceled them altogether. One year makes a huge difference, but only if you are vaccinated. There is still time between now and Thanksgiving to get both doses of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines or one dose of Johnson and Johnson. Health officials agree it is safe for fully vaccinated people to gather indoors this holiday season. ‘Safe’ also refers to the people around you, it isn’t all about you. Currently children under 12 cannot be vaccinated, though Pfizer has requested the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approve its vaccine for 5–11-year-olds. The FDA is expected to consider, and decide on the emergency authorization request, within a few weeks.

If that is approved, children under 5 years old will still be vulnerable to the virus. That is why it is so important for all eligible people to get vaccinated. Vaccinated people protect children who can’t be and vaccinated people with underlying health conditions. The vaccine is also safe for pregnant women and their unborn children. In fact, it’s encouraged, because pregnant women who contract COVID-19 have a much greater chance of complications than unvaccinated women who are not pregnant.

Vaccines are free at HCPH vaccine sites. While appointments are not required, they are recommended, go to vacstrac.hctx.net or call **832-927-8787**. To find a location near you [click here](#). Parents are encouraged to get 12–17-year-old children vaccinated with the two-dose Pfizer vaccine. They must accompany them to the vaccine site or children must bring a consent form signed by a parent or guardian. Consent forms are at vacstrac.hctx.net

For children under 12, testing is recommended to help keep children and families safe. If they know their children have COVID-19, parents can monitor them to make sure they don’t get extremely ill and isolate them so they don’t infect others. Testing is free at HCPH sites. Appointments are not required, but are recommended. [click here](#) to find a site near you or call **832-927-7575**.

HCPH is the local public health agency for the Harris County, Texas jurisdiction. It provides a wide variety of public health activities and services aimed at improving the health and well-being of the Harris County community.

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